SHADOW STRIKES
20
JUN 91
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THE Shadow™ STRIKES!
"THE STAR AND THE TWISTED CROSS"
by ELLIOT S. MAGGIN, ROD WHIGHAM & GERRY FERNANDEZ

KARL--!
WHERE'S KARL...?
WHERE I ALWAYS AM.
FOR IMMEDIATE DECODING, KARL. PRIORITY ONE!
CONSIDER IT...
...DONE?
WHO AUTHORIZES THIS INTRUSION--
--AN URGENT COMMUNICATION--
--MEIN FUHRER.
THIS IS THE FINAL STRAW--!
HE ACCEPTED...

"THE STAR AND THE TWISTED CROSS"

AS TOLD TO ELLIOT S. MAGGIN - GUEST WRITER
ROD WHIGHAM AND GERRY FERNANDEZ - ARTISTS

LETTERED BY ALBERT DE GUZMAN
COLORED BY ANTHONY TOLLIN
EDITED BY BRIAN AUGUSTYN

"...A DISTINGUISHED VISITING PROFESSORSHIP IN PHYSICS, ACTUALLY. BUT THERE IS A CERTAIN UNDERSTANDING--

--THAT BECAUSE OF HIS RELIGION, THE PROFESSOR WILL NOT BE RETURNING TO GERMANY. TELL ME, DEAN MOTTER...

"...WHEN DO YOU EXPECT HE WILL BE ARRIVING IN NEW JERSEY?

IT'S QUITE CLASSIFIED, OF COURSE--

LAMONT CRANSTON ESQ.

--BUT DON'T MISS THE UNIVERSITY DONORS' RECEPTION IN THREE WEEKS, OLD MAN..."

PRINCE

"...BECAUSE THERE JUST MAY BE AN UNANNOUNCED GUEST.

WHAT ARRANGEMENTS HAVE YOU MADE FOR THE PROFESSOR'S SECURITY?

SECURITY?..

"...WHY THE HOLY HELL WOULD HE NEED SECURITY? DO YOU THINK THAT BLOODY DICTATOR WANTS TO GET RID OF THOSE PEOPLE BY JUST KILLING THEM ALL OFF--

"--INCLUDING THE FINEST MINDS HIS COUNTRY'S EVER PRODUCED?

"I MEAN... WHAT EVIL DO YOU THINK COULD LURK IN THE HEART OF ONE LITTLE MAN?"

HANGAR

I HATE THIS STUFF. DO WE HAVE TO FLY?

I'M AFRAID SO, MARGO...

HOWARD AIRPORT

"...WE HAVE A BOAT TO CATCH.

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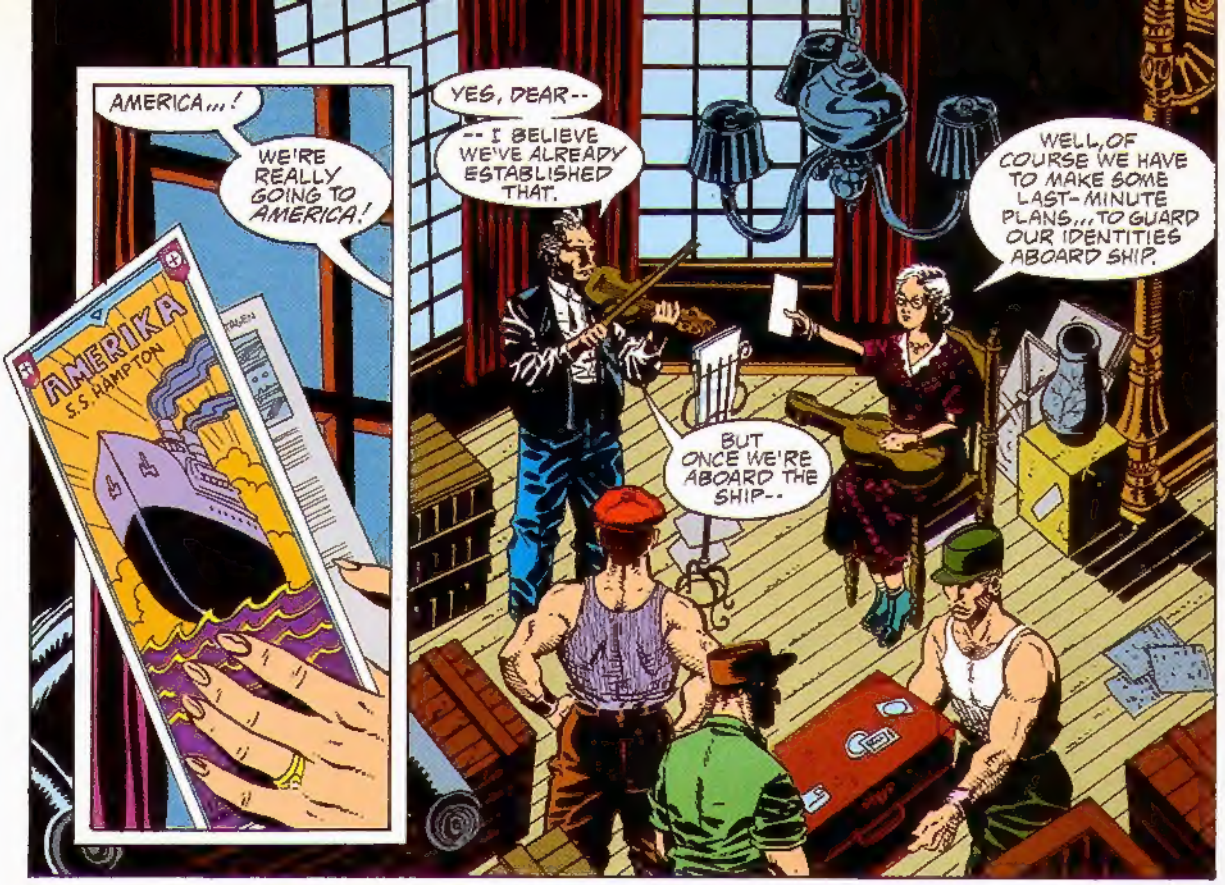
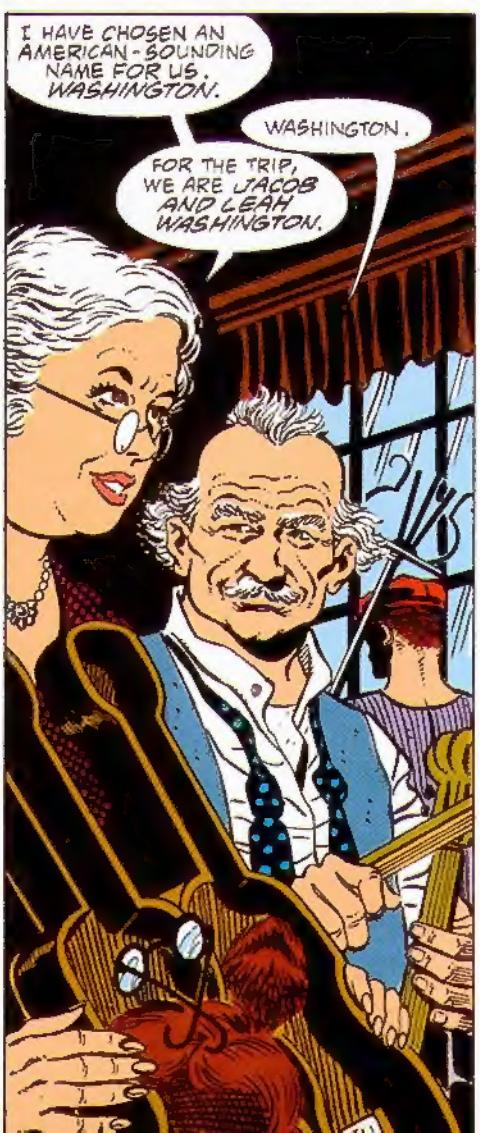
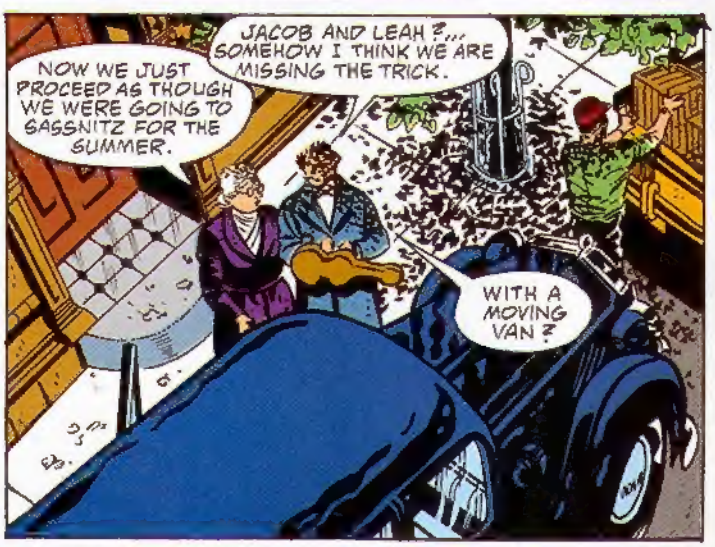
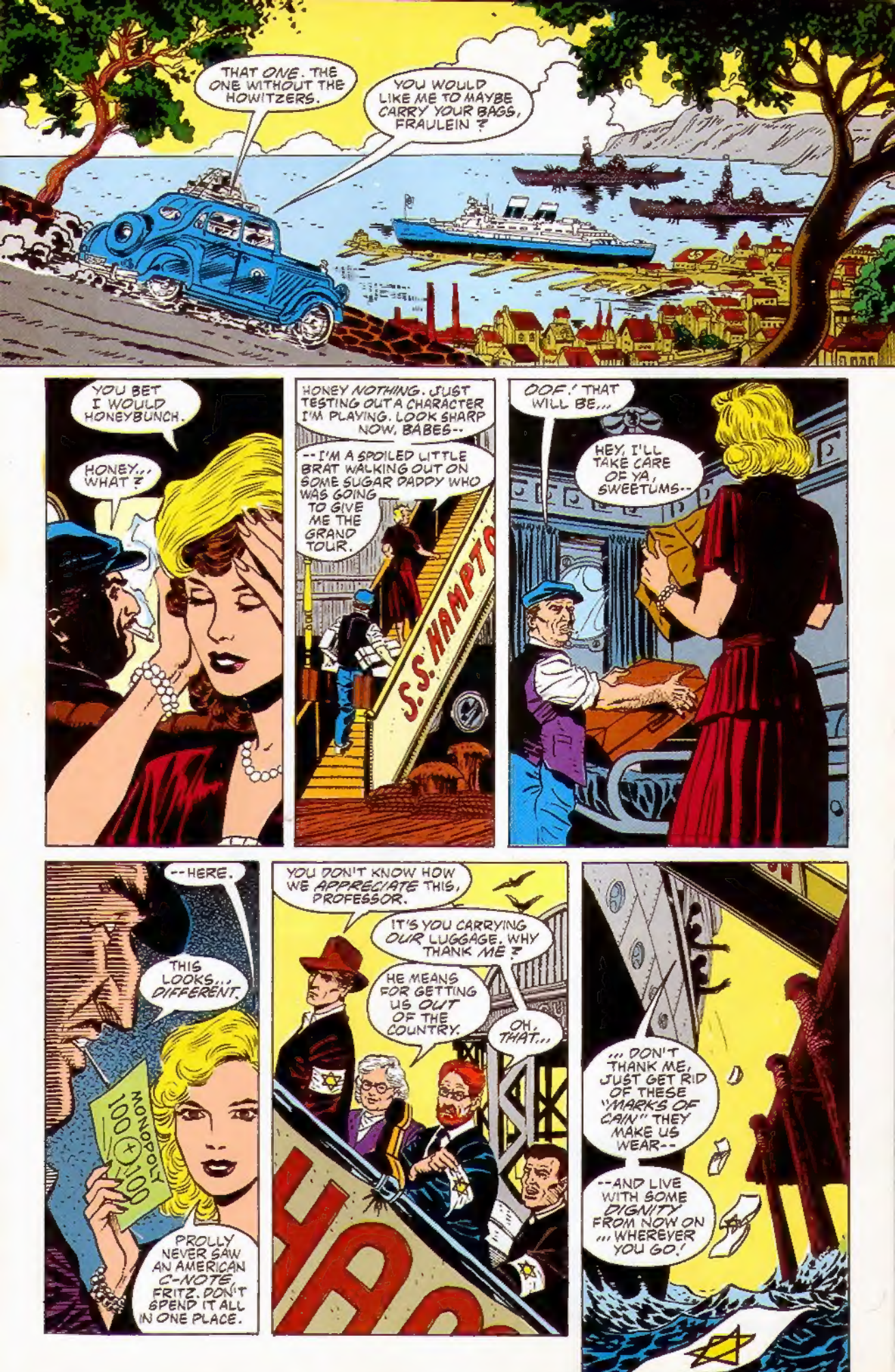

AMERIKA
S.S. HAMPTON
AMERICA...!
WE'RE REALLY GOING TO AMERICA!
YES, DEAR--
-- I BELIEVE WE'VE ALREADY ESTABLISHED THAT.
WELL, OF COURSE WE HAVE TO MAKE SOME LAST-MINUTE PLANS... TO GUARD OUR IDENTITIES ABOARD SHIP.
BUT ONCE WE'RE ABOARD THE SHIP--

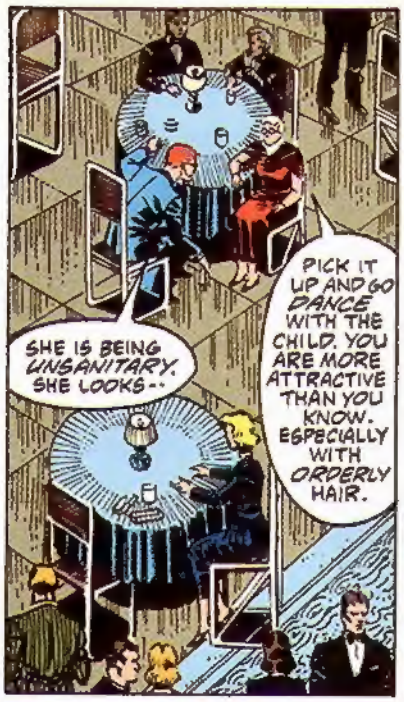

I HAVE CHOSEN AN AMERICAN-SOUNDING NAME FOR US. WASHINGTON.
WASHINGTON.
FOR THE TRIP, WE ARE JACOB AND LEAH WASHINGTON.


JACOB AND LEAH?... SOMEHOW I THINK WE ARE MISSING THE TRICK.
NOW WE JUST PROCEED AS THOUGH WE WERE GOING TO SASSNITZ FOR THE SUMMER.
WITH A MOVING VAN?

PAY NO ATTENTION TO THE MOVING VAN. IT IS TAKING A DIFFERENT ROUTE.
SASSNITZ?... IN SEPTEMBER?
NO SPLITTING OF HAIRS. COME ALONG... JACOB!
BRAUN
MADEIN-HO


THAT ONE. THE ONE WITHOUT THE HOWITZERS.
YOU WOULD LIKE ME TO MAYBE CARRY YOUR BAGS, FRAULEIN ?
YOU BET I WOULD HONEYBUNCH.
HONEY... WHAT ?
HONEY NOTHING. JUST TESTING OUT A CHARACTER I'M PLAYING. LOOK SHARP NOW, BABES--
-- I'M A SPOILED LITTLE BRAT WALKING OUT ON SOME SUGAR DADDY WHO WAS GOING TO GIVE ME THE GRAND TOUR.
S.S. HAMPT
OOF.' THAT WILL BE...
HEY, I'LL TAKE CARE OF YA, SWEETUMS--
--HERE.
THIS LOOKS... DIFFERENT.
MONOPOLY
PROLLY NEVER SAW AN AMERICAN C-NOTE, FRITZ. DON'T SPEND IT ALL IN ONE PLACE.
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW WE APPRECIATE THIS, PROFESSOR.
IT'S YOU CARRYING OUR LUGGAGE. WHY THANK ME ?
HE MEANS FOR GETTING US OUT OF THE COUNTRY.
OH, THAT...
... DON'T THANK ME, JUST GET RID OF THESE "MARKS OF CAIN" THEY MAKE US WEAR--
--AND LIVE WITH SOME DIGNITY FROM NOW ON ... WHEREVER YOU GO.'

THE LADY DROPPED HER SCHMATA.
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND ANYTHING, MR. WASHINGTON." THE GIRL IS BEING DEMURE.


SHE IS BEING UNSANITARY. SHE LOOKS--
PICK IT UP AND GO DANCE WITH THE CHILD. YOU ARE MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN YOU KNOW. ESPECIALLY WITH ORDERLY HAIR.

GO! GO!
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! BUT YOU KNOW I CAN'T DANCE.
I COUNT ON IT!

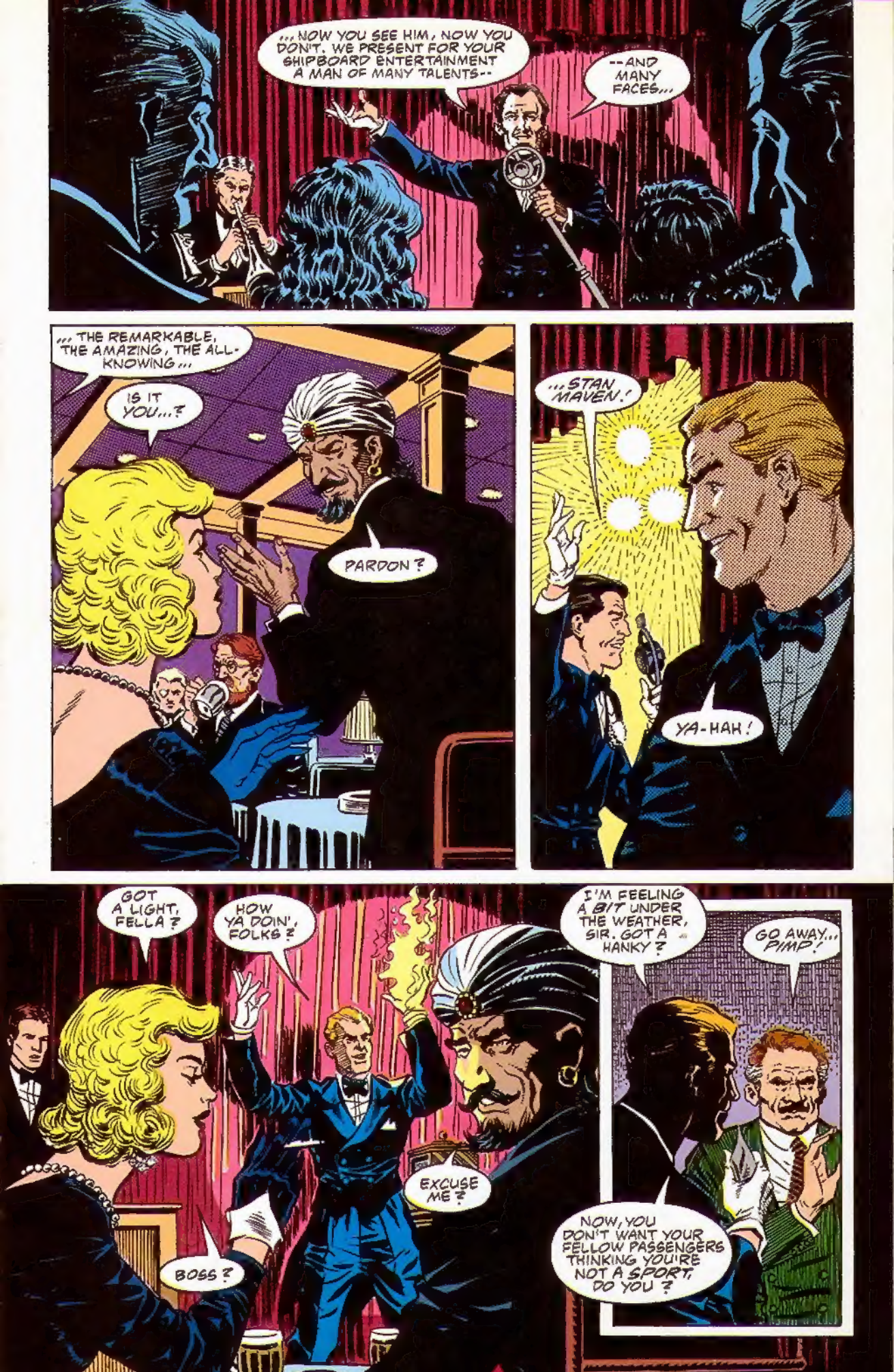
MISS, I BELIEVE YOU DROPPED TH--
OH THANK YOU EVER SO MUCH!

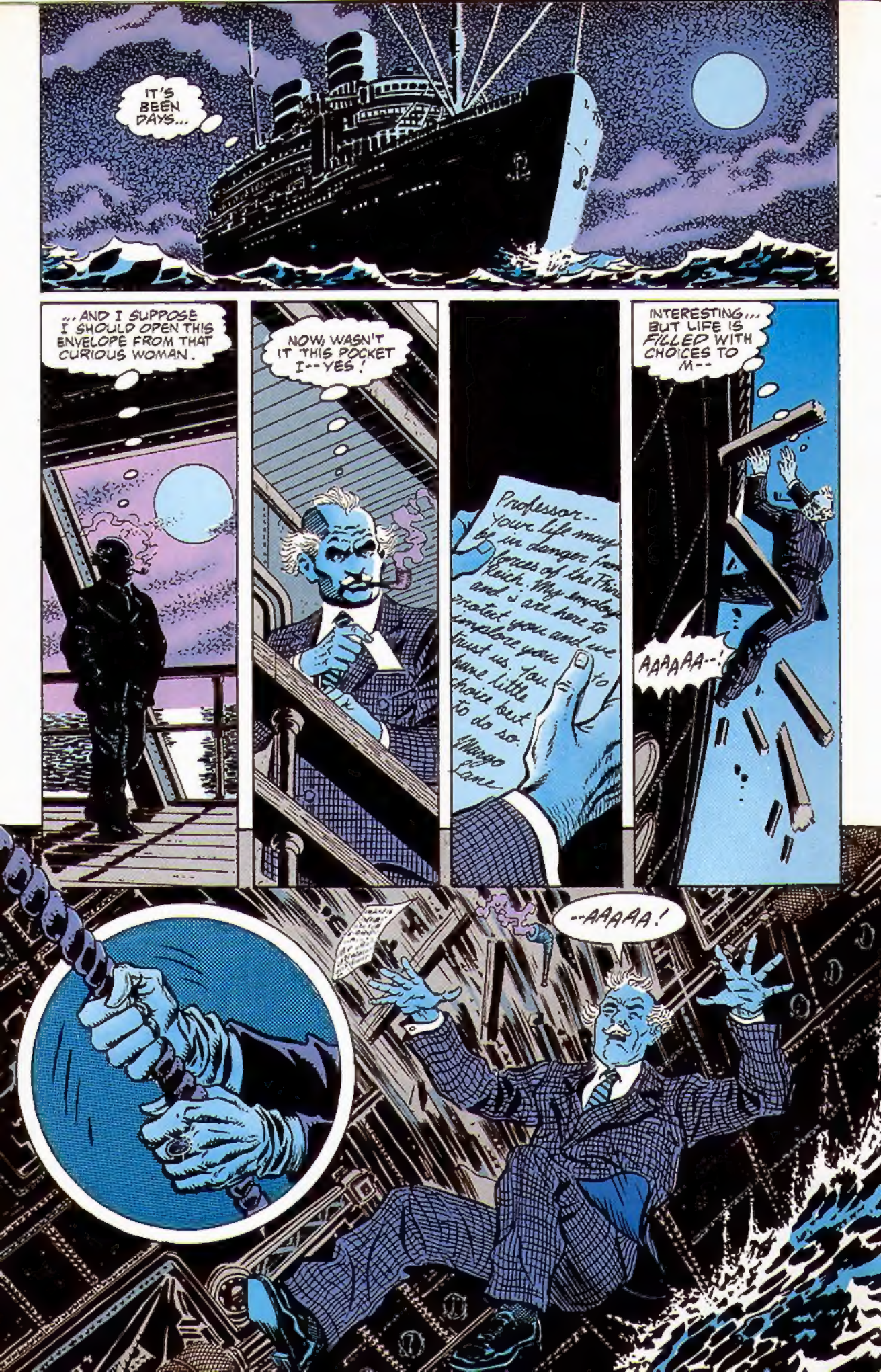
THIS IS NO PLACE TO TALK. YOU MUST TRUST US.
US? WHO IS US--?

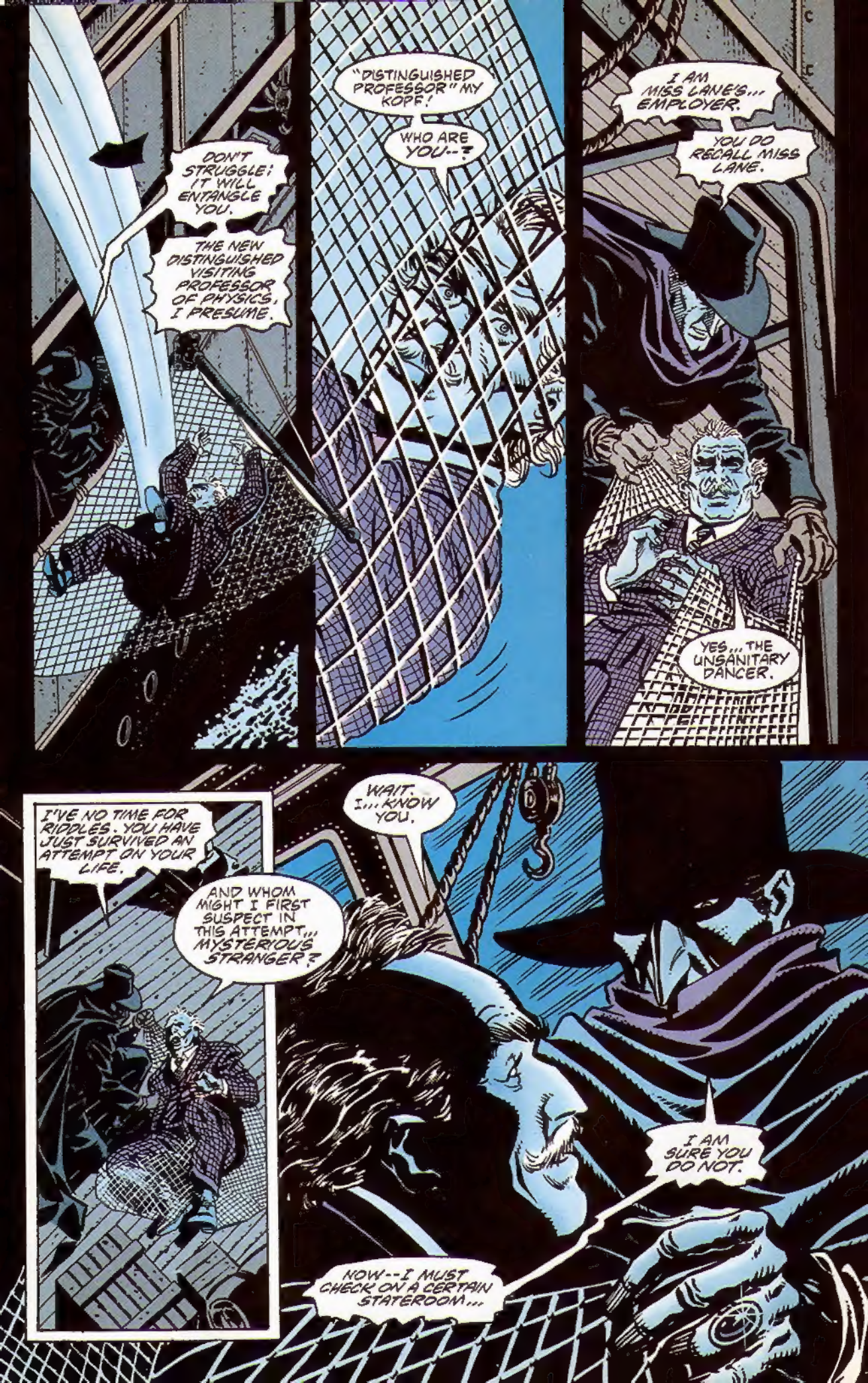
IT APPEARS THE PROFESSOR'S DISGUISE MAY BE WORKING.
HMMPH!

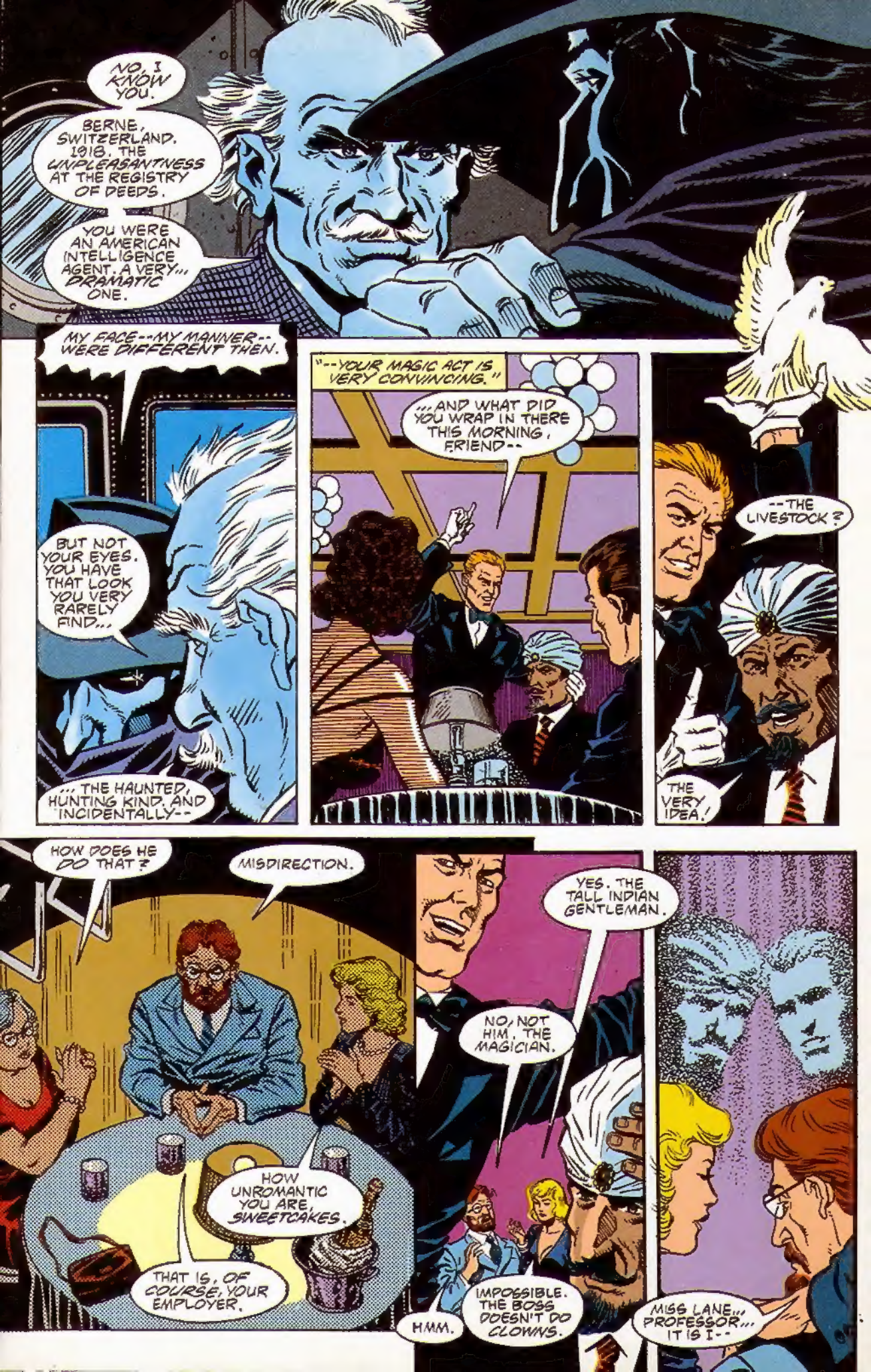
TAKE THIS. DON'T OPEN IT UNTIL YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY ALONE...

SHE IS A VERY GOOD DANCER.
I SHOULD SAY SO.
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...


...NOW YOU SEE HIM, NOW YOU DON'T. WE PRESENT FOR YOUR SHIPBOARD ENTERTAINMENT A MAN OF MANY TALENTS--
--AND MANY FACES...
...THE REMARKABLE, THE AMAZING, THE ALL-KNOWING...
IS IT YOU...?
PARDON?
...STAN MAVEN!
YA-HAH!
GOT A LIGHT, FELLA?
HOW YA DOIN', FOLKS?
EXCUSE ME?
BOSS?
I'M FEELING A BIT UNDER THE WEATHER, SIR. GOT A HANKY?
GO AWAY... PIMP!
NOW, YOU DON'T WANT YOUR FELLOW PASSENGERS THINKING YOU'RE NOT A SPORT, DO YOU?

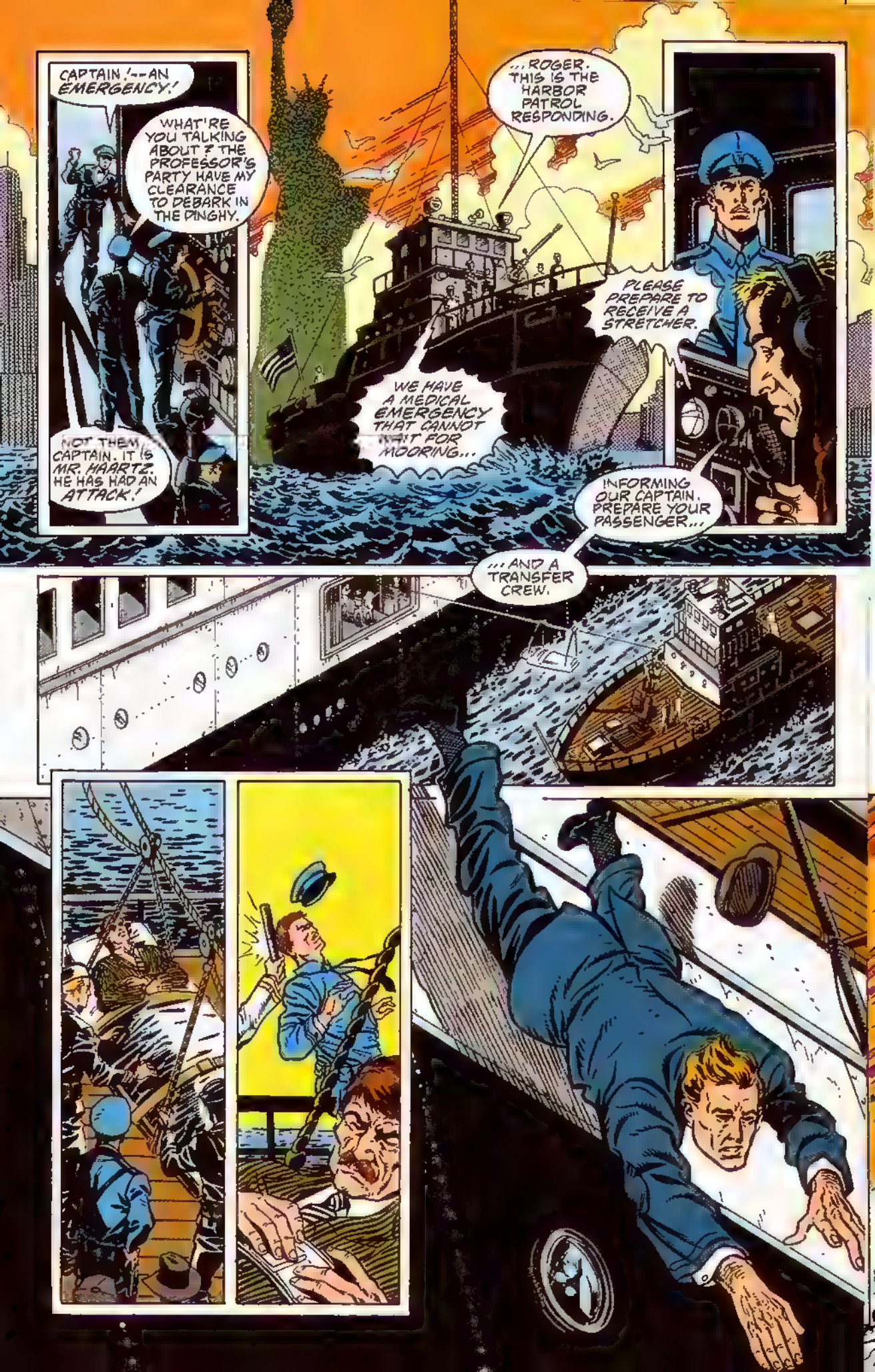

IT'S BEEN DAYS...
...AND I SUPPOSE I SHOULD OPEN THIS ENVELOPE FROM THAT CURIOUS WOMAN.
NOW, WASN'T IT THIS POCKET I--YES!
Professor--
Your life may be in danger from agents of the Third Reich. My employer and I are here to protect you and we implore you to trust us. You have little choice but to do so.
Margo Lane
INTERESTING... BUT LIFE IS FILLED WITH CHOICES TO M--
AAAAAA--!
--AAAAA!


DON'T STRUGGLE; IT WILL ENTANGLE YOU.
THE NEW DISTINGUISHED VISITING PROFESSOR OF PHYSICS, I PRESUME.
"DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR" MY KOPF!
WHO ARE YOU--?
I AM MISS LANE'S... EMPLOYER.
YOU DO RECALL MISS LANE.
YES... THE UNSANITARY DANCER.
I'VE NO TIME FOR RIDDLES. YOU HAVE JUST SURVIVED AN ATTEMPT ON YOUR LIFE.
AND WHOM MIGHT I FIRST SUSPECT IN THIS ATTEMPT... MYSTERIOUS STRANGER?
WAIT. I... KNOW YOU.
I AM SURE YOU DO NOT.
NOW--I MUST CHECK ON A CERTAIN STATEROOM...


NO, I KNOW YOU.
BERNE, SWITZERLAND. 1918. THE UNPLEASANTNESS AT THE REGISTRY OF DEEDS.
YOU WERE AN AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE AGENT. A VERY... DRAMATIC ONE.
MY FACE--MY MANNER--WERE DIFFERENT THEN.
BUT NOT YOUR EYES. YOU HAVE THAT LOOK YOU VERY RARELY FIND...
... THE HAUNTED, HUNTING KIND. AND INCIDENTALLY--
"--YOUR MAGIC ACT IS VERY CONVINCING."
...AND WHAT DID YOU WRAP IN THERE THIS MORNING, FRIEND--
--THE LIVESTOCK?
THE VERY IDEA!
HOW DOES HE DO THAT?
MISDIRECTION.
HOW UNROMANTIC YOU ARE, SWEETCAKES.
THAT IS, OF COURSE, YOUR EMPLOYER.
YES. THE TALL INDIAN GENTLEMAN.
NO, NOT HIM, THE MAGICIAN.
HMM.
IMPOSSIBLE. THE BOSS DOESN'T DO CLOWNS.
MISS LANE... PROFESSOR... IT IS I--

GOOD OF YOU TO JOIN US, MR.
S-SOSS...?
I BELIEVE I HAVE DETERMINED THE IDENTITY OF OUR WOULD-BE ASSASSIN.
WOULDN'T BE... THE TALL INDIAN GENTLEMAN, WOULD IT?
I DO NOT BELIEVE SO. MY SUSPECT IS THE LARGE-SHOULDERED, TACITURN MAN NEAR THE BAND. BUT HAVE A CARE--
"--HE SEEMS TO BE BETTER ORGANIZED THAN WE SUSPECTED ...WITH HIS OWN OPERATIVE IN UNEXPECTED CORNERS."
WE CAN BIDE OUR TIME UNTIL WE GET THE OLD FOOL AND HIS SOW AMONG THE CROWD ON THE PIER.
THERE IS LITTLE RUSH. WE LAND...
"...TOMORROW!"
--AND TODAY IS THE DAY.
THE PRINCETON UNIVERSITY FACULTY WILL WELCOME A NEW PHYSICS PROFESSOR TO THEIR RANKS--
--ONCE HE MANAGES TO RUN THE GANTLET BEING SET UP BY THE PRO-NAZI DEMONSTRATORS HERE TO PROTEST HIS ARRIVAL.
EVEN THOUGH THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IS NEUTRAL AS EVER IN THE CONFLICT PERCOLATING IN EUROPE...
NO MORE FOREIGN SCIENCE!!!
AMERICANS IN SOLIDARITY WITH GER
SIEG HEIL!
DEUTSCHLAND UBER ALL
"...ANYONE HERE IS FREE TO DEMONSTRATE PEACEABLY FOR A PARTICULAR POINT OF VIEW."

IS THAT SOMEONE AT THE DOOR?
EVIDENTLY...
...WE HAVE VISITORS.
SIR, MADAM. WE HAVEN'T A MOMENT TO SPARE. WE MUST DEBARK IMMEDIATELY.
DEBARK--?
BY DINGHY. THERE ARE DEMONSTRATORS ASHORE. UGLY CROWD.
WE BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE ALL SAFEST WITH A SECRET LANDING. IS ANY OF YOU A COMPETENT SAILOR?
HAMPTON
AHEM.
IS THAT--?
THE PIGS!
THE PROFESSOR IS LEAVING THE SHIP EARLY, DOUBTLESS WITH PERMISSION OF THE AUTHORITIES. INFORM THE CAPTAIN...
...I AM ABOUT TO COME DOWN WITH A SERIOUS ILLNESS.

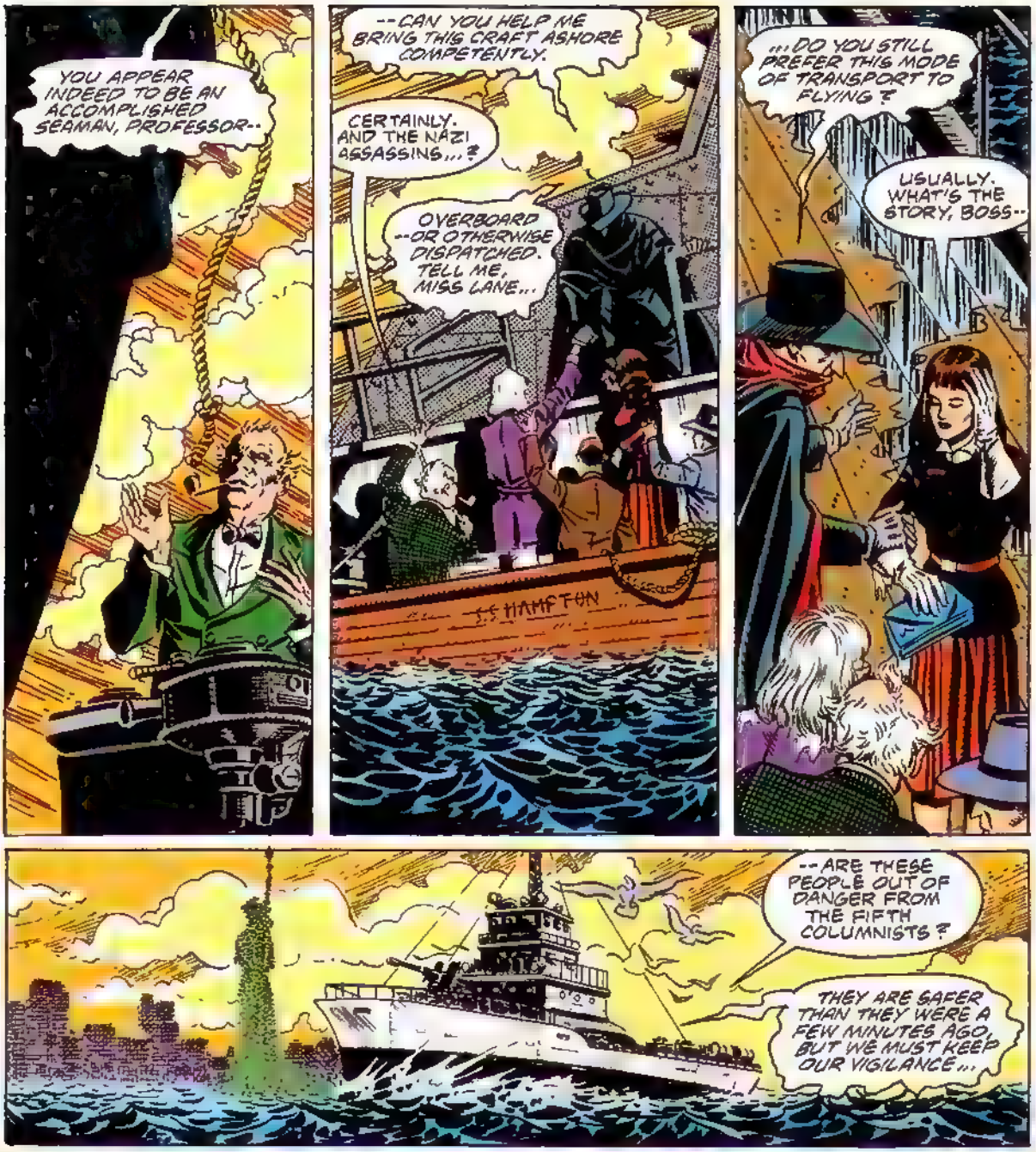

CAPTAIN!--AN EMERGENCY!
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT? THE PROFESSOR'S PARTY HAVE MY CLEARANCE TO DEBARK IN THE PINGHY.
NOT THEM CAPTAIN. IT IS MR. HAARTZ. HE HAS HAD AN ATTACK!
...ROGER. THIS IS THE HARBOR PATROL RESPONDING.
PLEASE PREPARE TO RECEIVE A STRETCHER.
WE HAVE A MEDICAL EMERGENCY THAT CANNOT WAIT FOR MOORING...
INFORMING OUR CAPTAIN. PREPARE YOUR PASSENGER...
...AND A TRANSFER CREW.

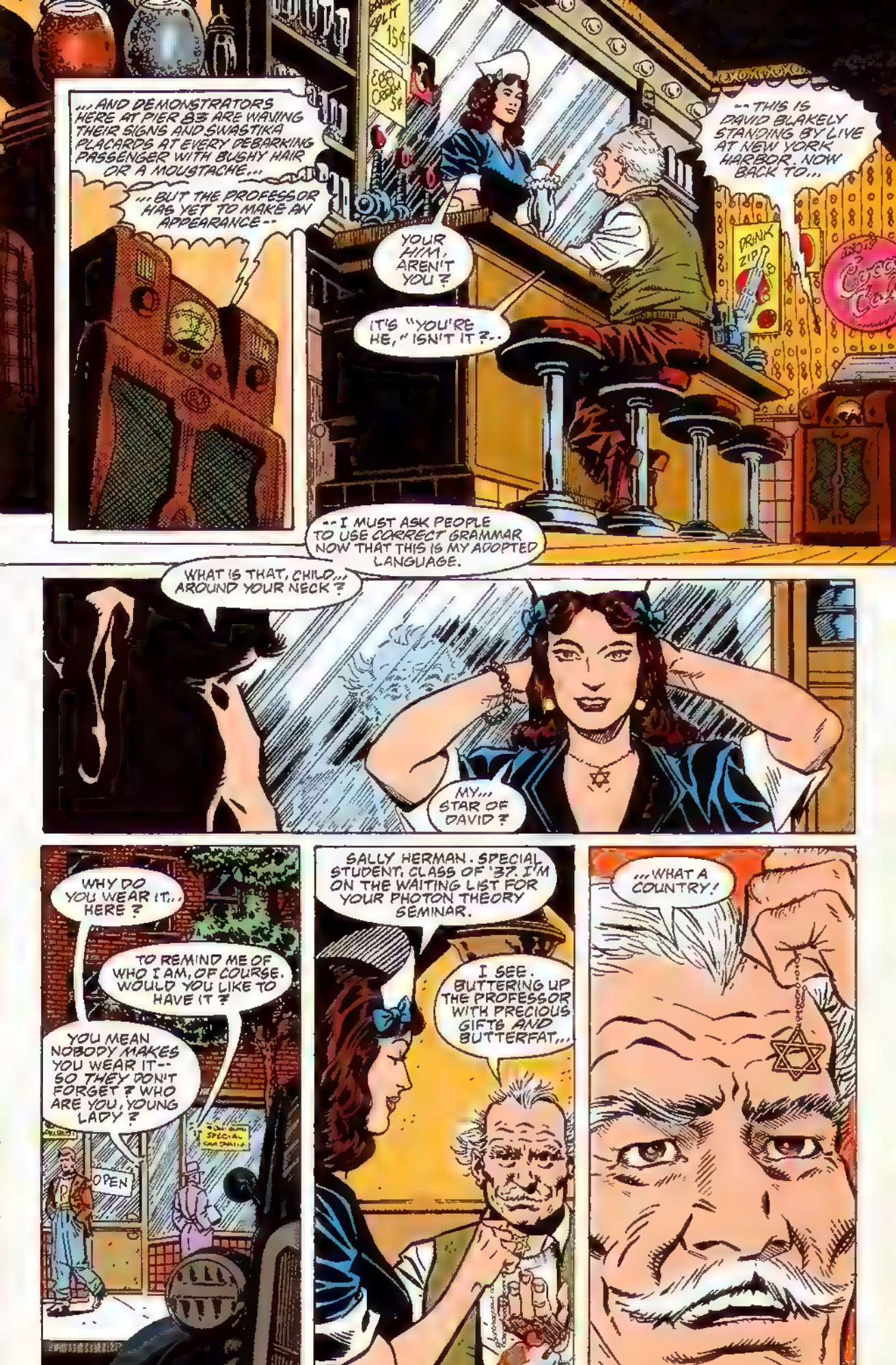
COAST GUARDSMEN BEING THROWN OFF THE LAUNCH...
...THIS HAARTZ HAS MORE "TRUE BELIEVERS" IN HIS EMPLOY THAN IS ALTOGETHER COMFORTABLE.
IF I CAN PULL MY WAY ALONG THE TOW ROPE--
--BEFORE THE LAUNCH RESUMES ITS CRUISING SPEED--
--I HAVE A CHANCE OF BOARDING IT...

...UNSEEN.
--UFF!
POW
POW
POW
SPLASH
SO MUCH FOR COMPLETE SURPRISE. I MUST ACQUIRE A DRY WEAPON.

THAT WAS A SHOT!
ARE YOU CERTAIN WE HAVE CLEARED THE LAUNCH OF ALL BUT OUR OWN EIGHT OPERATIVES?
ABSOLUTELY, SIR...
"...BUT THE OTHERS REMAIN ON ALERT JUST THE SAME."
THERE HE IS!
DO WE KILL HIM OR BRING HIM TO HAARTZ?
WHILE YOU PONDER THIS...
...I SHALL GO ABOUT MY BUSINESS.
I WILL REQUIRE THIS OF YOU--
--AND I HOPE YOU SWIM ADEQUATELY.

WE ARE ALMOST UPON THEM.
SHALL WE TAKE THEM ABOARD OR--
RAM THEM. THEN WE CAN PICK UP THE PIECES.
LET THERE BE AN END TO THIS!
YOU NOW ALL HAVE A LAST OPPORTUNITY TO SURRENDER.
THEN WE SHOULD CONSIDER THIS, YES?--
"--OR MAYBE NOT."
IS THERE A CHANCE WE'LL SURVIVE THIS TRIP?
POSSIBLY. YOU DON'T KNOW THE BOSS.
IN FACT, I THINK I SEE THE LAUNCH SLOWING...
...A HOPEFUL ILLUSION, MISS LANE--
--A SHAME WE SHALL SOON HAVE TO LOSE THEM ALL.
I THOUGHT I SAW SOMEONE TUMBLE OVERBOARD.
FROM THE LAUNCH? WAS HE WEARING BLACK OR...?


YOU APPEAR INDEED TO BE AN ACCOMPLISHED SEAMAN, PROFESSOR--
--CAN YOU HELP ME BRING THIS CRAFT ASHORE COMPETENTLY.
CERTAINLY. AND THE NAZI ASSASSINS...?
OVERBOARD --OR OTHERWISE DISPATCHED. TELL ME, MISS LANE...
...DO YOU STILL PREFER THIS MODE OF TRANSPORT TO FLYING?
USUALLY. WHAT'S THE STORY, BOSS--
--ARE THESE PEOPLE OUT OF DANGER FROM THE FIFTH COLUMNISTS?
THEY ARE SAFER THAN THEY WERE A FEW MINUTES AGO, BUT WE MUST KEEP OUR VIGILANCE...
...FOR A WOUNDED ANIMAL IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN A SIMPLY ANGERED ONE.


...AND DEMONSTRATORS HERE AT PIER 83 ARE WAVING THEIR SIGNS AND SWASTIKA PLACARDS AT EVERY DEBARKING PASSENGER WITH BUSHY HAIR OR A MOUSTACHE...
...BUT THE PROFESSOR HAS YET TO MAKE AN APPEARANCE--
--THIS IS DAVID BLAKELY STANDING BY LIVE AT NEW YORK HARBOR. NOW BACK TO...
YOUR HIM, AREN'T YOU?
IT'S "YOU'RE HE," ISN'T IT?--
--I MUST ASK PEOPLE TO USE CORRECT GRAMMAR NOW THAT THIS IS MY ADOPTED LANGUAGE.
WHAT IS THAT, CHILD,... AROUND YOUR NECK?
MY... STAR OF DAVID?
WHY DO YOU WEAR IT... HERE?
TO REMIND ME OF WHO I AM, OF COURSE. WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE IT?
YOU MEAN NOBODY MAKES YOU WEAR IT-- SO THEY DON'T FORGET? WHO ARE YOU, YOUNG LADY?
OPEN
SALLY HERMAN. SPECIAL STUDENT, CLASS OF '37. I'M ON THE WAITING LIST FOR YOUR PHOTON THEORY SEMINAR.
I SEE. BUTTERING UP THE PROFESSOR WITH PRECIOUS GIFTS AND BUTTERFAT...
...WHAT A COUNTRY!

LOVELY HOME THEY PROVIDED FOR US, YES ?
HAVE A ROSE, WHY DON'T YOU, MY DEAR --AHH ?
ONLY A PIG WOULD ABANDON THE FATHERLAND!
DIE-- SWINE!
BLAM BLAM
WHERE DID-- WHAT DID-- HOW...
A TRICK. DON'T YOU MOVE, COW!

MAKEUP! A DISGUISE...
...BUT WHO--
YOU--!
NO! STAY BACK!
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF--
P
THIS BATTLE IS A STANDOFF BUT THE WAR IS YET TO COME.
SLOWLY NOW, DROP YOUR WEAPONS OR I CRACK THE BIDDY'S NECK.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF--
HA HA HA HA HA HA H
THE WEED OF TYRANNY BEARS BITTER FRUIT...
BLAM BLAM
...THE SHADOW KNOWS!
HA HA HA HA
MAY I...
...CALL YOU A TAXI?

NICE HOUSE THEY FOUND FOR US, YES ?
TAXI
THERE'S MY CAB. IT'S BEEN AN HONOR, PROFESSOR.
PRINCETON JUNCTION RAILROAD STATION, PLEASE.
JA, FRAULEIN.
... AND LIEBCHEN, I WONDER IF YOU WOULD LIKE A LITTLE NECKLACE SOMEONE GAVE ME--
CABBIE...
WOULD YOU LIKE THE TICKET OFFICE--
--OR CAN I TAKE YOU DIRECTLY TO THE MANSION ?
...DON'T I KNOW YOU ?--
I BELIEVE THIS IS YOURS, MISS LANE. I WILL NOT BE REQUIRING IT ANY LONGER.
HAHAHAHAHA
A GRIM BOLT OF LAUGHTER PIERCES THE BRIGHTENING DAY, TO HANG ON THE AIR LIKE DAMP FOG...
...AND THEN, LIKE A CHESHIRE GRIN, IT FADES.
THE END

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Jones, Whigham, Fernandez, Augustyn:

Okay, guys, time to 'fess up. Was the whole two Lamont Cranstons business your idea, or was this very important aspect of Shadow lore established in pulp novels and radio scripts of yore? Do tell!

In any event, take a bow.

Finished? Take another bow

All this bowing is because I am very, very impressed with your non-cheesiness. These days, where every comics cover is loaded with hype screaming "the secret revealed" or "the shocker of the century," you kept cool and let us get this revelation full in the face with no warning. It's nice to see someone sell a book by pushing good art and stories rather than cheap marketing. Pretty cool.

I also enjoyed the handling of the issues of feminism and sexism, both obvious and subtle. I like the fact that you set this book in a past era and yet are still objective of the social and political moods of the time.

The next time you use a guest artist, find someone with a radically different style than Eduardo Barreto, perhaps Mark Badger? Heh, heh. Just kidding,guys, I really liked the Barreto-esque art on this two-parter. Excellent storytelling!

Some serious suggestions: How about another annual? Or maybe a story about Neo-Nazism in the U.S. during the late thirties? How about Alex Toth drawing an issue?

Frank Balkin
Los Angeles, CA

Ever since Mr. Toth began working on films in your home town, Frank, it's been tough to coerce him into doing any comics art. Rest assured, though, if it is at all humanly possible to get him to do an issue of THE SHADOW STRIKES!, we'll do it! By the way, you were just kidding about NOT wanting Mark Badger to do an issue or two, weren't you?

* * * * *

Dear Brian,

Why am I not surprised by the outcome of THE SHADOW STRIKES! #17? I hadn't even considered Bama, and when she was unmasked as the mysterious number one I was reminded of the old cliché: "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned." Caulfield tired of being a servant to the Hunt Club and sought revenge. I should have guessed right away it was her, since she had an all-female team backing her up. Foolish me.

Now that we have established that Lamont Cranston is merely a friend of the Shadow and nothing more, I won't bother asking what his real identity is, no doubt prohibited by time-honored tradition to ever be revealed. This issue was a good change of pace—no Margo or Harry, just Cranston and his "alter ego." Good and solid. Keep it up, Gerard—I think you're doing fine!

Jacob Gilbert
Troy, NY

* * * * *

Hey, Brian,

The story that concluded in THE SHADOW STRIKES! #17 was excellent; I just hope it also marks the end of Rod Whigham and Gerry Fernandez as guest artists and that Eduardo will be returning to full artistic chores next issue.

Rod and Gerry are good, but Ed manages not only to capture, but to convey the gritty and mysterious world of the enigmatic Mr. Cranston and his colleagues. If Ed were forced off the title I would take my leave as well. Gerard's stories are exceptional, but it takes Ed's visuals to truly make it all work.

Elvis Orten
Dawson Springs, KY

Relax, Elvis, Eduardo is just taking a breather so that he and Brian can complete the GOTHAM BY GASLIGHT sequel. Although you may not have liked Rod and Gerry, you have to admit that Mark Badger's interpretation makes it very hard to cast Eduardo as the "only" Shadow artist!

* * * * *

ATTENTION ALL SHADOW FANS! Lonely lettercol writer seeks fascinating dialogue with readers everywhere! Don't let me (and this letters page) die of a broken heart! Write!

—Dan Thorsland

NEXT ISSUE: The Shadow's best kept secrets are falling into the wrong hands, and his agents are disappearing one by one! How? Only one man could do this to the Dark Avenger...Shiwan Khan!

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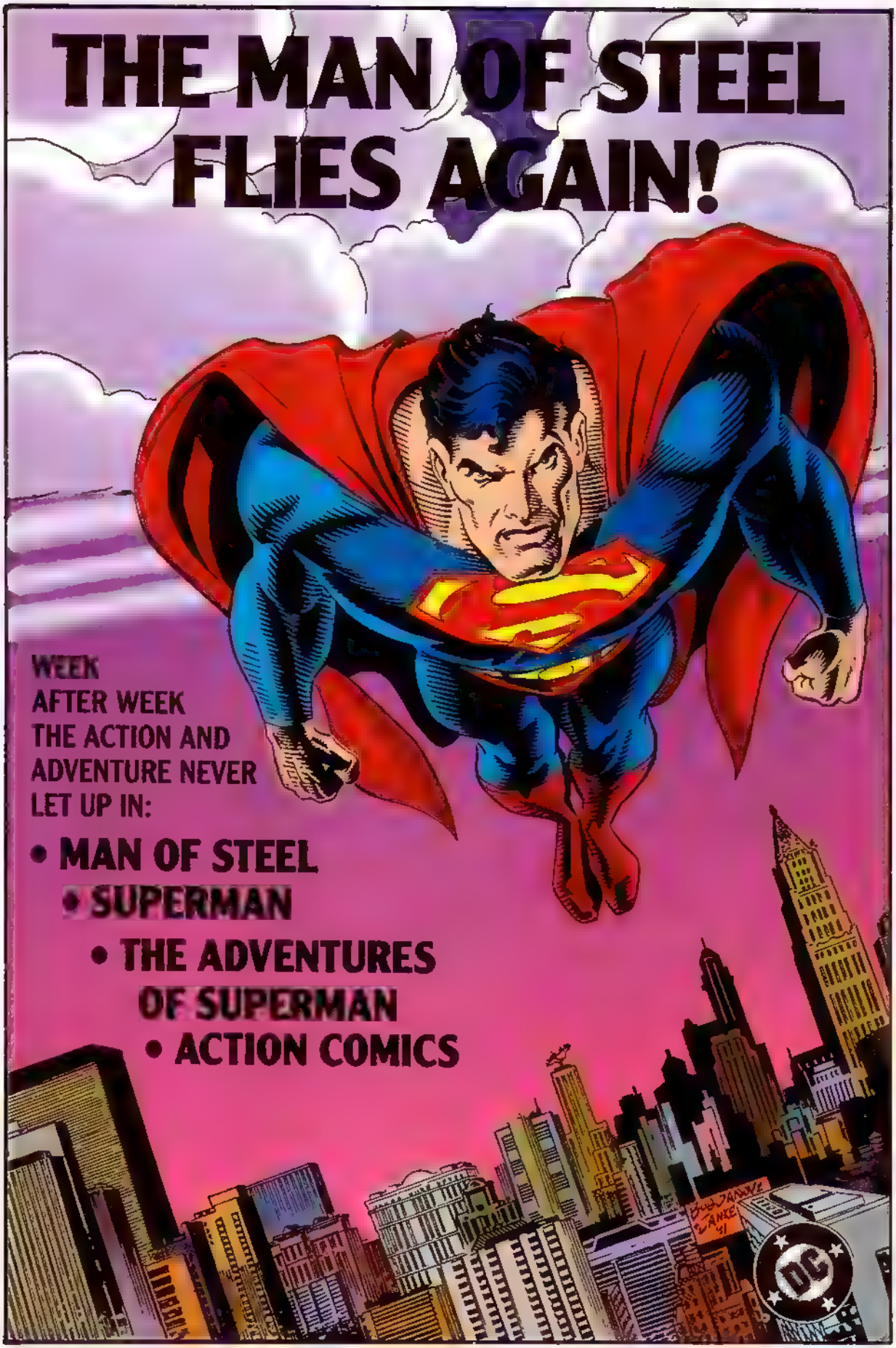
THE MAN OF STEEL FLIES AGAIN!
WEEK AFTER WEEK THE ACTION AND ADVENTURE NEVER LET UP IN:
• MAN OF STEEL
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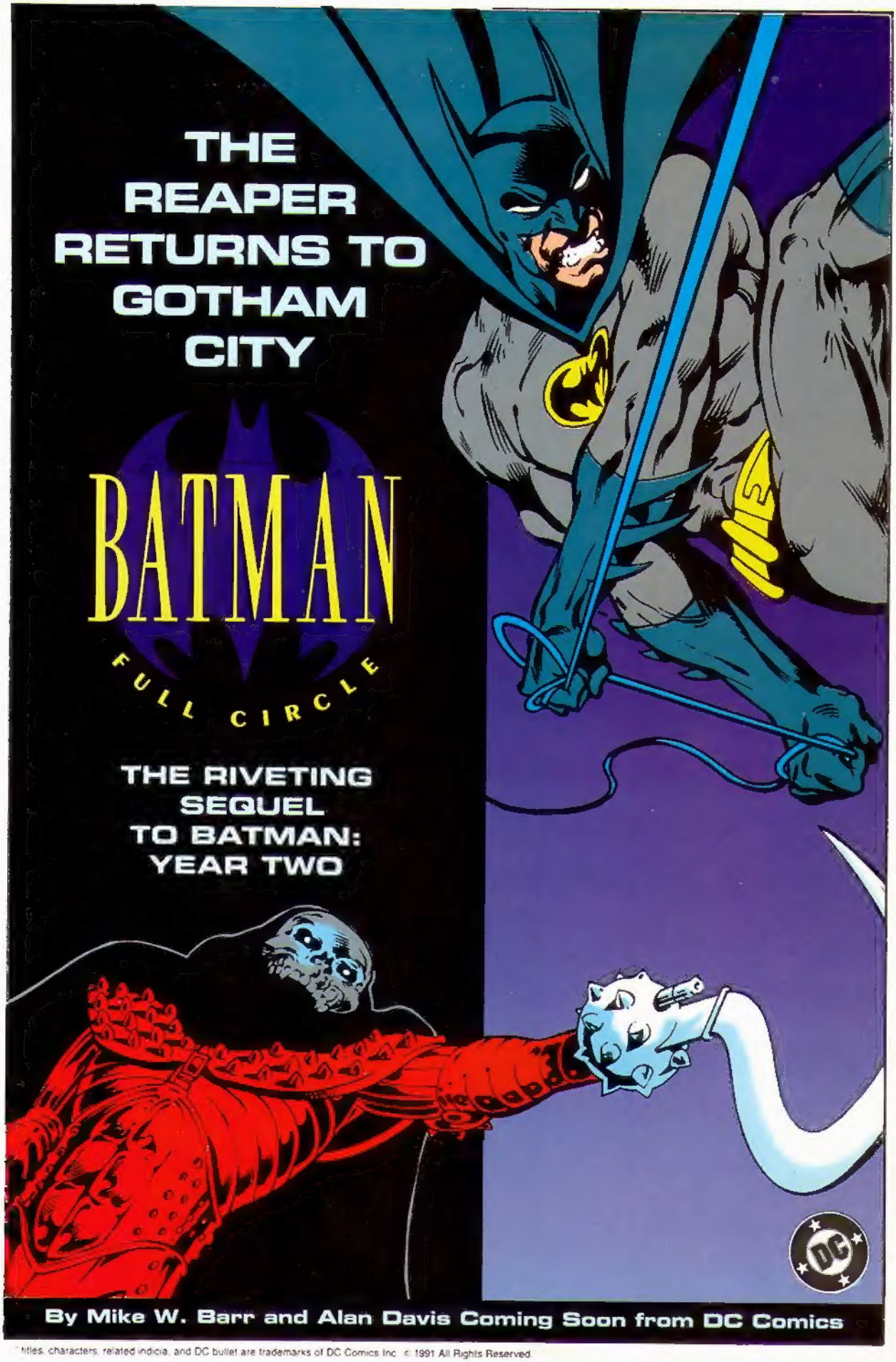
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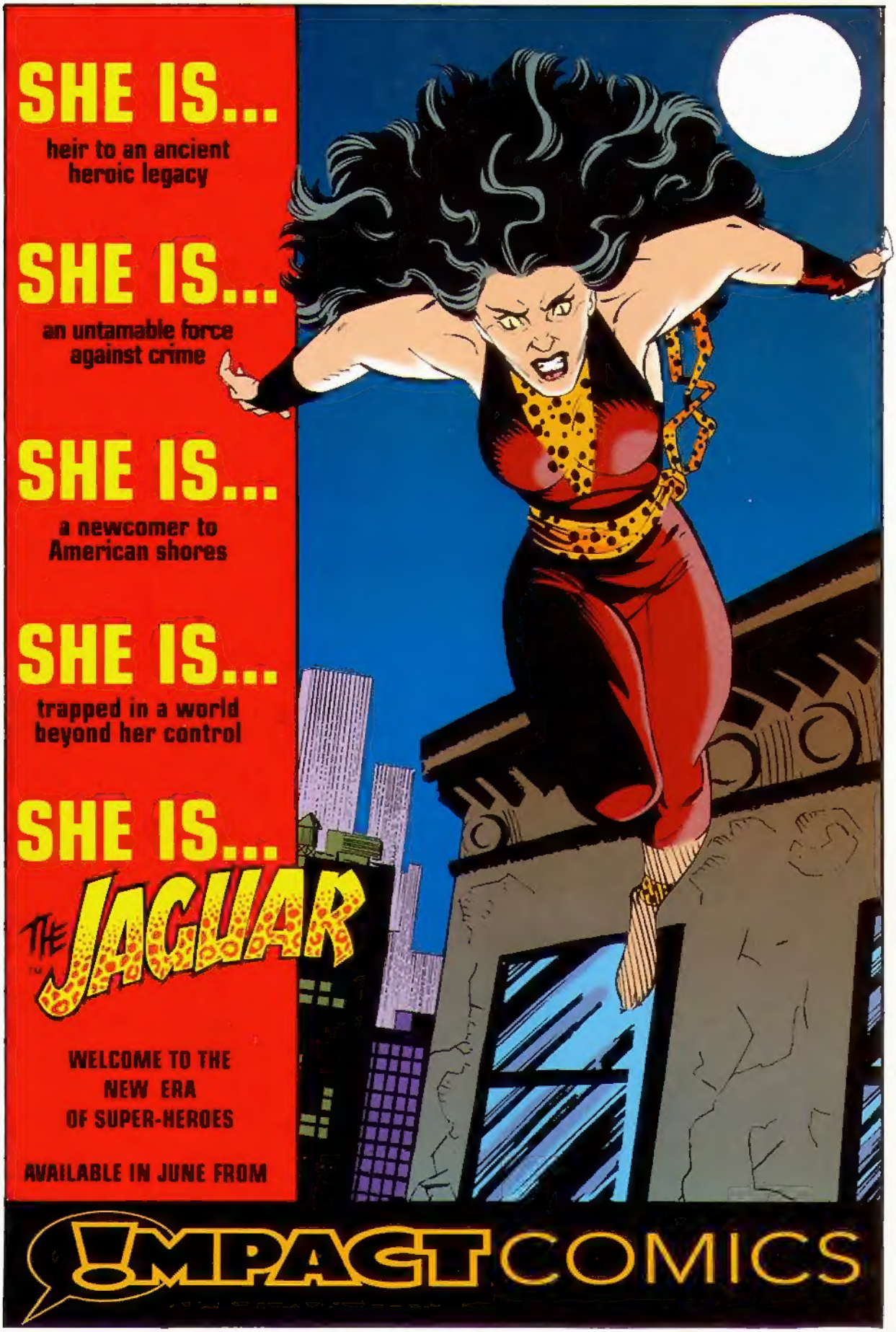

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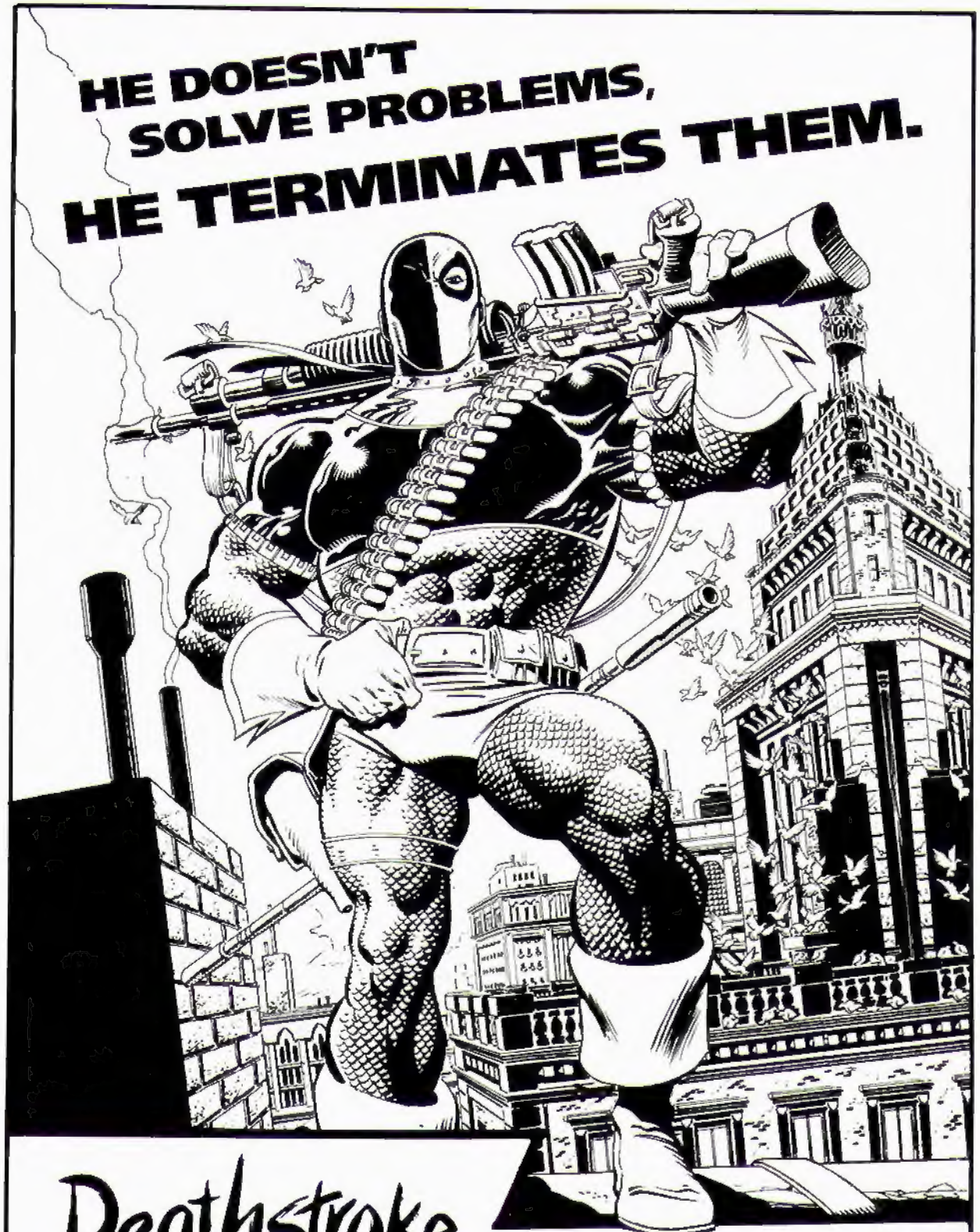

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